HOT DRINKS, FOODSERVICE, FOOD-TO-GO

CAFE BUYER

MAGAZINE

From the publishers of SPECIALITY FOOD

2021



YORKSHIRE TEA CELEBRATES HOSPITALITY SECTOR

SPECIALTY COFFEE ASSOCIATION

JENN RUGOLO: THE FUTURE OF CAFÉS
P. 4



LUMINA INTELLIGENCE

KATIE PROWSE: WHAT'S NEXT IN FOOD-TO-GO
P. 12



SH FOODIE

HEATHER MORRIS: TOP TRENDING COLD DRINKS
P. 16





WELCOME TO CAFÉ BUYER

Welcome to the 2021 edition of *Café Buyer*, brought to you by the publishers of *Speciality Food*.

The past 18 months have served up a number of scenarios we've never seen before: cafés were hit by decisions around whether to shut up shop (either forever or for an unknown period of time) or innovate; footfall was hugely diminished, shrinking the potential customer base for businesses across the UK; and consumers took to purchasing their own coffee kit so they could recreate their favourite brew at home in the absence of their usual coffee shop haunt.

While none of us can be certain about what is around the corner, we can be comforted by the fact that not only has the open mindedness and determination to succeed demonstrated by independents over recent



times resulted in solid foundations for the future, but that today's shopper is more concerned about quality, provenance and experience than ever – all attributes that indies have in spades.

Whether your business has pivoted to cater to changing demand, stood firm and supported your local community, or is just starting out on your café and foodservice journey, this edition of *Café Buyer* is for you. Inside you'll find product recommendations covering hot and cold drinks, food and café equipment, profiles of some of the most exciting brands and products in the market today, and a deep dive into the Covid experiences and future of Britain's café culture.

Until next time.

HOLLY SHACKLETON | EDITOR

INSIGHT

4 The Future of Café Culture

12 Grab a Bite

16 Cool Refreshers

20 Year-round Warmers

24 What's In Store Post-Covid?

28 A New Dawn for Independent Cafés



PROFILES

6 Good Earth

8 Fentimans

10 Taylors of Harrogate

14 Cakehead

18 The Skinny Food Co.

22 Cawston Press

23 Planted

27 Just Milk

30 Kite Packaging





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COMMENTATORS



ED PARKES
THE GENTLEMEN BARISTAS



JACK LINSTEAD
JACK'S SHACK



PETER GIULIANO
SPECIALITY COFFEE ASSOCIATION



THE GENTLEMEN BARISTAS

THE FUTURE OF CAFÉ CULTURE

The changes wrought by Covid-19 bring a wealth of opportunities for discerning consumers, and the businesses who serve them, finds Ellen Manning

The coronavirus pandemic has been responsible for wholesale changes across the whole of society, with no sector left untouched. While some may talk about getting 'back to normal', for many areas, businesses and people, nothing will be the same again. Cafés and coffee provided a lifeline for many during the Covid pandemic and its lockdowns, and potentially changed the way we view our morning coffee forever. So, have the past 18 months changed UK café culture for good? And what is its future?

For Peter Giuliano, chief research officer at the Specialty Coffee Association, the key is community. "One of the primary consumer-driven trends we're seeing is the desire for the coffee shop to be a community space, linked closely to a neighborhood and its residents," he says. "For so many people today, the home is also the workplace, and having a place to go to for community interaction and good coffee is increasingly important to consumers. This has led to café owners being much more focused on consumer needs and desires, which may be specific to a particular community." The trend isn't wholly attributable to the pandemic, says Giuliano, but it has definitely been accelerated by it. "Many café owners see themselves as committed members of a community, with a duty to provide support and relief to their customers. This has led to an attitude of flexibility and consumer-centrism among those coffee shops that remained open during the lockdowns, many cafés choosing to expand their menus to accommodate consumer desires for more food and beverage options." The shift also includes an acceptance that while people love going to cafés, they've also embraced making coffee at home, which means cafés are now increasingly providing beans, equipment and education to consumers who previously relied on them for just the drinks, and sharing that education and knowledge via social media.

Developing connections

Giuliano's predictions tie with the experience of café owners 'on the ground'. Jack Linstead, owner of Jack's Shack in Warwick, has seen a shift over the past year as customers have got to know their independent cafés better than ever before. "People now realise that independents by and large are very good and you do get a high standard. People think, 'Oh my god, independent cafés and

WHAT'S NEXT FOR **COFFEE**



Jenn Rugolo, editor at the Specialty Coffee Association, shares her forecast

"I think a big trend we'll start to see blossom as lockdowns end and consumers become more comfortable leaving their homes is a drive to build an experience. Coffee-drinkers have had to learn how to make or recreate their favourite beverages at home, so they'll need something beyond great coffee to entice them back into shops. From what I'm seeing already, I think this will either be through increased acts of service and hospitality but also, perhaps, in offering more complex drinks than could be easily achieved at home or building/designing unique spaces." She agrees that social media proficiency has been vital in driving and maintaining a customer base – proven during the pandemic and set to continue. "Anecdotally, those shops who performed best in the pandemic were prolific in their communications about their offerings and changes to service as lockdowns began and eased, further cementing cafés and coffee shops as community centers, even in the digital world. I think we'll continue to see social media play an increasingly important role in driving a return to café spaces, understanding community desires to build more customer-centric offerings, and driving growth."



what they offer are great. They are putting the time, the research in, the expertise in'. The flip side of that, interestingly, is that people expect a very high quality from an independent. It's almost like they'll go to a chain and grab a coffee and a tuna melt and accept that it's a bit middle of the road. But if people go to an independent they expect a very nice experience – which they should – there's that expectation that it will be very good."

That expectation and a drive for something different is making Linstead and partner Michelle Matthews consider everything they do when it comes to both food and drink. "It's certainly making us think about our menu, what we offer, what's that little bit different. In as far as the menu goes and what's on offer, it's got to be very good. Customers are also becoming very aware of the provenance of their food. We get a lot of questions about whether we make things in-house, or if we use a local bakery. Going forward people are seeing the importance of that collaboration, of local businesses working together." Linstead agrees that community is key when it comes to the café culture of 2021 and beyond. "Coffee shops have become the community hubs that pubs once were. People are coming for that social interaction that previously they may only have found in a pub. We are getting more and more demand from people who aren't necessarily going out and drinking but they want to go out and have a coffee into the evening. I think that will continue to grow so we're also looking at our opening hours and potentially opening into the early evening." Alongside this, there's the demand from people who want to work from coffee shops, he says – something which is going nowhere – meaning café culture increasingly involves catering for that need, from providing connectivity and plug sockets, to thinking about how your offering caters for people using your café as a base to work from."

> "One of the primary consumer-driven trends we're seeing is the desire for the coffee shop to be a community space, linked closely to a neighbourhood and its residents"

A considered offering

The growing interest from people in where their coffee comes from and how it's made is connected to what Giuliano calls a global interest in "variety and excitement in coffee", from diverse coffee preparations and beverages like cold brew. Yet while specialist coffee, education and expanded offerings are all important, for many in the industry it all comes back to experience – and community. "Coffee consumption continues to grow, and it seems that the café's role as a community center, as well as a provider of good food and drink, will continue to be important to neighborhoods of all kinds," he says.

For Parkes, that element of community is more important than ever in a world still reeling from the events of the past 18 months. "We are all about great customer service and being well-mannered means being friendly to our customers, respectful to our suppliers and generous to our neighbours," he adds. "It means being upstanding behind the counter and in the community. It means always thinking about others, and this is more important than ever in a post pandemic world."


JACK'S SHACK



JACK'S SHACK

RETAILER FOCUS



For Ed Parkes, founder director of London-based The Gentlemen Baristas, which this year is opening two new locations in central London, Bruton Place in Mayfair and a new flagship store on Piccadilly, individuality is key

Asked what the customer of 2021 wants from the cafés of today compared to what people wanted previously, his answer is simple. "The age of copy and paste coffee house – people don't want that any more." Like many other café owners, Parkes has seen that lockdown caused people to invest more in local and independent and specialist coffee houses. He sees the café culture of the future as drawing on a range of attributes – from an exploration of specialist coffee to that all-important community and customer experience. "For some people, lockdown has meant buying specialist coffee to drink at home and people expect more. It's the sourdough effect. They want to buy quality coffee with more people exploring more roasts. We hope this trend will continue." While Parkes' focus is on The Gentlemen Baristas' London coffee houses, there are also plans to expand its roastery in 2022 to meet growing demand as customers explore their love of coffee. "The new roastery will be the epitome of The Gentlemen Baristas Coffee experience which will be a place for people to come and see what we do – for novices and aficionados. We like to cater for what people like and ensure we have a broad range for everyone. It goes back to day one when we decided to offer a friendly and informative service and fight against what we call baristocracy. What you taste will be different to what I taste. We want to educate people but get their feedback too and converse with people on coffee – it's so subjective."

> "People now realise that independents by and large are very good and you do get a high standard. People think, 'Oh my god, independent cafés and what they offer are great. They are putting the time, the research in, the expertise in'"







A HEADY BREW

Want to wow ethical customers and woo those who put flavour first? Just add hot water, says tea connoisseur Liliana Jauregui

COMMENTATORS



LILIANA JAUREGUI
MARKETING MANAGER

What happens when the energy of 70s California meets a contemporary thirst for great taste and strong ethics? You brew up a recipe for tea sales success, says Liliana Jauregui. As brand manager at Good Earth – a company founded in California in 1972 with deep roots in the wellness movement – Liliana keeps a close eye on foodservice trends. "People are eager for new taste experiences and exciting flavours when out and about and natural healthy teas which are a little bit different from the norm will have great appeal," she explains.

More tea, Britain?

The data Good Earth cites is certainly interesting. Pre-pandemic, the average household spend on food and drink away from home was £27.40 per week, representing five percent of total expenditure. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, a third (33%) of people are prepared to spend more on leisure activities, such as drinks or meals out, than they were before the pandemic. What's more, unforeseen circumstances aside Mordor Intelligence is forecasting growth of 3.02% CAGR (compound annual growth rate) for food service from 2021 to 2026, which means whatever fluctuations the period brings there will be opportunities to offer customers new products and refreshing new taste experiences.

Flavour first

Whatever the destination, restriction-weary consumers expect more from their out-of-home visits than ever before; more in terms of taste and experience; more from being able to eat and drink in-line with their lifestyle goals; and more from the brands they choose in terms of their ethical and environmental values. "Tea should stir the senses and create a special moment," says Liliana, "so our bags have been crafted to deliver something special from the first sight to the final sip." A fresh new brand to the UK marketplace, Good Earth has a range of eight stunning flavours of biodegradable tea bags and four variants of loose tea. As an early pioneer of fruit and herbals in 1970s California, the company has perfected the delivery of out-of-the-ordinary-flavour combinations. Its range boasts some enticing options, starting with black, green and white teas and taking in herbal and botanical blends plus a warming rooibos chai.

A conscious cuppa

In addition to a good selection from the traditional blends like Good Earth English Breakfast to the more exotic like Good Earth Hibiscus, Rose & Sweet Berries, Liliana recommends café buyers plump for products that reflect something of their own values and signature style. If, like many indie outlets, you recognise an opportunity to win ethically-motivated consumers Good Earth can help. "Good taste and naturalness are our watchwords, but so is consideration for the environment," says Liliana. "We believe that this is becoming an important consideration for many in their food and drink choices." Whilst the popularity of fruit and herbal spans generations, according to Good Earth its products have particular appeal to younger drinkers – an important group of customers to nurture. "Every sip of Good Earth is a sip of positivity giving back to the planet," points out Liliana. "Good Earth teas are ethically and sustainably sourced, all packaging is recyclable or 100% biodegradable and one percent of gross sales go to environmental non-profits as part of the '1% for the Planet' initiative."

If boosting sales in your café, coffee counter or drinks concession is a priority, Good Earth has a range of point-of-serve display options and communication materials to catch your customers' attention and bring the teas' values and qualities to life.

> "Good taste and naturalness are our watchwords, but so is consideration for the environment"

GOOD EARTH
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*Kombucha - Winner Chilled Fortified Drinks Category. Survey 9,865 People by Kantar



LET THERE BE LIGHTS

Out-of-home indulgence has evolved, but you can trust Fentimans to serve up a winner

It's certainly been a turbulent 18 months for cafés and drinks counters, with openings, closings, pivots, a staffing pingageddon and a revolving roll call of protocols to share with staff and customers. One fundamental principle holds true however: great food and drink served with a smile is an experience consumers will always come back for. And after an endless round of lockdowns, quarantines and closures, enjoying a drink out of home has never felt more appealing. But while small indulgence and treats are in high demand, consumers are more aware of the impact their choices can have on their health. They want a treat, but it must fit with their wider lifestyle goals.

Step up Lights, a new range from Fentimans that gently minimises sugar whilst delivering maximum refreshment. Each recipe represents a 30% sugar reduction on its classic counterpart in the well-loved Fentimans range, and every bottle in the Lights range contains less than 60 calories.

"There's definitely a growing awareness of sugar consumption across all food and drink categories as consumers become more health conscious and governments impose more and more regulations on brands and suppliers," says Fentimans' out-of-home marketing manager, Neil Donachie. "Consumers have never been more aware of their own calorie intake and are subsequently monitoring their sugar intake."

A lighter range is a smart move from a popular brand: Fentimans is the number one glass bottle premium soft drink in foodservice, according to most recent information from market analysts CGA. What's more, the 'high street food-to-go' category, which includes coffee shops, is the sector with the highest distribution of Fentimans soft drinks in foodservice. Loyal fans will be impressed with the new formulations: despite the drop in indulgence each lightly sparkling drink is still a true treat and packed with flavour. Notes of Bulgarian rose oil still sing in the Rose Lemonade; delightful scents of rural hedgerows still infuse the Sparkling Elderflower, and Sparkling Raspberry is as fruity and delicately tart as ever.

Revisiting a recipe is a bold move for a premium drink range, especially with a loyal following to satisfy. "The challenge for Fentimans was creating a light range drink using all natural ingredients and maintaining the exquisite flavour we're known for," says Neil. "In other light drink ranges, compromises on overall flavour are sometimes made to meet the requirements of lower sugar and calories. Our approach was always to ensure that anything we produced would contain just as much flavour as our standard range. To do this, we have had to make adjustments and some complex reformulations to our recipes, but the authentic flavour we're known for has been maintained."

Natural processes and time-honoured processes have always been part of Fentimans USP, so the tinkering with the recipe required a nuanced approach. "All of Fentimans soft drinks are made using a unique, artisanal technique known as botanical brewing in which natural botanicals are infused, fermented and blended for several days to create layers of complex flavours," says Neil. "Our Lights range of drinks still follows this same process," points out Neil, "and this provides additional challenges in comparison to other light ranges." The hard work to reformulate the range has paid off; Fentimans Lights serve up enviable flavour and mouthfeel. Consumers can feel good about their drink without compromising on pleasure; cafés can serve up the lighter bottles knowing they deliver the delightful flavours confirmed fans of the brand will expect.

Offering a truly iconic British classic has always been a sound strategy, but with Fentimans Lights on the menu there's a new opportunity to give your café customers exactly what they want.

> "Fentimans is the number one glass bottle premium soft drink in foodservice, according to recent information from market analysts CGA"


Full of botanical flavour
FENTIMANS
CHERRY COLA
CURIOSITY COLA
VICTORIAN LEMONADE
ROSE LEMONADE
GINGER BEER
ESTD 1905
FENTIMANS





BREWING SMILES

What does it take to build a cult tea brand? Great tea, and some good fun says Yorkshire Tea's Greg Harvey

COMMENTATOR



GREG HARVEY
OUT-OF-HOME SALES CONTROLLER

A proper brew, pure and simple

What inspires the loyalty and affection of our fans? First and foremost, it's literally down to the fact that Yorkshire Tea is a proper brew – pure and simple. We mean what we say when it comes to doing things properly, and never compromising on quality. In a world where consumers often feel like every business out there is trying to take them for a ride, this is a big deal. People can follow up on what we say we do to a really granular level – from the quality of our tea to our commitment to sustainability and the relationships we build with our suppliers.

Name changes and proposals

Over the years we have had some wonderful requests from loyal customers... including a fan changing their middle name by deed poll! In 2019, we helped Pete propose to his partner Tara in the Yorkshire Tea factory; drinking tea together played a unique part in their love story, so we helped Pete pop the question. Tara was astounded when he got down on one knee in the factory, with a handmade box of Yorkshire Tea with her engagement ring inside.

Zoom backgrounds and social distancing teapots

We aim to use our social media to connect with our customers and give them plenty to interact with and talk about. Throughout the pandemic we focussed on making people smile through unique and uplifting content, whether that be our Social Distancing Teapot video, Yorkshire Tea Instagram filters or Zoom backgrounds.

718 dunks!

It's difficult to narrow down our 'typical customer'... but we know one thing all our customers have in common is their appreciation of a proper brew. Everywhere we are served – from high street restaurant chains to rooms in Michelin-starred pubs – resonates with our focus on properness and quality. In fact, we recently took our tea van, Little Urn, to three Michelin-starred Yorkshire chefs and challenged them to create the ultimate biscuit for dunking. We were so pleased that they were all keen to get involved and we hope they enjoyed participating as much as we enjoyed watching (and eating the biscuits)! Michael Wignall of The Angel at Hetton blew us all away with his winning Garibaldi biscuit, achieving 718 dunks!

> "One thing all our customers have in common is their appreciation of a proper brew"

A celebration of hospitality

The last year has been particularly challenging for hospitality... and as we edge closer to normality, we wanted to do something to cheer things up and bring some much-needed fun to these businesses. That's why this autumn we'll be starting our 'You've Urn-ed It!' tour of the UK. We have been inviting nominations from out-of-home businesses who have 'urn-ed it' to receive a visit from our trusty tea van, Little Urn. The visits will include Yorkshire Tea games and prizes, and of course we'll be serving up LOADS of proper brews. We've received lots of nominations so far from businesses across the country and we can't wait to get out there to celebrate such an important sector.

Enjoying hospitality once more

If there is one thing the pandemic has taught us... it's how our favourite cafés and restaurants are so much more than the home of delicious food and drink.

Cafés and restaurants are the places we celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, the places we enjoy catch ups with friends, or go for a much-needed break. As the UK opens up again, it's been great to see people enjoying hospitality in this way once more.







Yorkshire Tea is now 100% carbon neutral!

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Find out more at taylorsoutofhome.co.uk

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GRAB A BITE

After recovering from more than a year of Covid restrictions, cafés can once again consider the full, compelling proposition of today's eat-in and takeaway offering. From grab-and-go bagged snacks that range from salty crisps to sweet and crunchy nuts to decadent treats that are worth lingering over with a coffee, there is so much fine fare to explore, no matter the scale of your food offering.



BAGGED SNACKS



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SERIOUS PIG CRUNCHY SNACKING CHEESE CLASSIC
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INDUSTRY REVENUE IN THE POTATO CRISPS AND SNACK SECTOR IS EXPECTED TO REACH £2.5 BILLION BY 2021

SOURCE: IBIS WORLD POTATO CRISPS & SNACKS PRODUCTION IN THE UK - MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

> "Capitalising on the 'picnic in the park' trend is a opportunity for food to go operators, with 21% of consumers planning on purchasing food to go to consume in a park in the future"
>
> **KATIE PROWSE, LUMINA**



> The less sugar trend is showing up across multiple food categories with claims that include reduced sugar, low sugar, no sugar, and no added sugars. While savoury snacks – such as roasted chickpea snacks, ancient grain crackers, and veggie chips – have an inherent advantage here, great strides are being made in creating delicious, low and no sugar nutrition and snack bars, as well as sports nutrition and meal replacement beverages

GLANBIA NUTRITIONALS HEALTHY SNACKING TRENDS FOR 2021 REPORT

SWEET TREATS

Indulgence remains a key area of the food sector, and while traditional premium luxuries such as ice cream and chocolate can be the pinnacle of sophistication, new product development in vean products is adding a new dimension to the sector. “In sweets and snacks, taste has always been a key driver and plant-based indulgence is powering NPD, combining natural and free-from benefits in established areas such as chocolate, extruded snacks, nuts and snack mixes, while also featuring novel ingredients as varied as hemp and hibiscus,” says Innova Market Insights.



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FOODSERVICE

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SUCCULENTO YELLOW CHILLI KETCHUP

A blend of yellow bell peppers, mangoes, turnip, white naga and a host of authentic ingredients. Rich in natural flavour for sandwiches and wraps.

succulento.co.uk

A SLICE OF SUCCESS

A pandemic pivot built consumers' love for these brilliant bakes; now your cake counter can capitalise on their success, says Cakehead's Nancy Mercala



COMMENTATORS



NANCY MERCALA
BRAND MARKETING MANAGER

Great cake is one of life's fabulous pleasures, synonymous with celebration, rewards and nostalgia. It's no wonder it remains a huge motivator for tempting consumers into your café, and helping raise their spend as they submit to temptation. But serving up fabulous cakes day after day – coming up with failsafe recipes that fit every fancy and meet every dietary requirement – can be a serious headache. That's where Rutland bakery Cakehead comes in. "We've been spreading joy through cakes from our Oakham-based bakery since 2004," says the bakery's Nancy Mercala. "Not only do we pride ourselves on producing pretty amazing brownies and bakes, we're also a little obsessed with outstanding customer service. After all, buying cakes should be just as much of a pleasure as eating it."

On a learning curve

In fact, the company's relationship with its buyers has undergone an unexpected evolution thanks to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting Cakehead's well-laid business plan. "In early 2020 we were building our factory ready to sell our wholesale cakes to garden centres, cafes and delis," explains Nancy. "But when the pandemic hit, we had to quickly change our strategy. We developed our Cakeout range specifically for the B2C market, making cake and traybake selection boxes the perfect gifting option whilst we were in lockdown." Brownies, blondies, and fruit and nut bars flew around the nation, spreading love for Cakehead's beautiful bakes.





What's more, the mailbox business allowed the bakery to share cafe culture with locked-down Brits, sharpening its offer to the consumer whilst gaining valuable feedback on exactly what tickles tastebuds when it comes to indulgent snacking. "The B2C mail order has been super successful," says Nancy, "however, now we are coming out of this Covid craziness we are re-launching the wholesale side of the bakery at the end of August with our original plan. Our directors, Chris and Helen, have created over 50 jobs during the pandemic, employing a whole team for our factory based in Oakham. This is because whilst we pride ourselves on our delicious cakes, we also take great care over our customer service. Having a great team allows us to product perfect cakes that taste and look amazing but are also delivered on time."



Whipping up profits

If you're looking to outsource baking at your café you'll be glad you looked to Cakehead. Its success comes down to the bakers' constant attention to its unique selling points: farm fresh ingredients; homemade recipes that let your customers taste the love; and fantastic vegan and gluten-free options to help you wow this growing market. The team is committed to techniques that give everything a home-baked taste: free-range eggs are cracked by hand; lemons are freshly squeezed to order; Belgian chocolate is skilfully hand-paddled... and every product is hand picked to ensure its suitability and freshness.

The result? Visually stunning bakes that will win wavering customers and taste every bit of fabulous as they look. "We offer a large variety of products to add height, variety and excitement to your display and keep customers coming back for more," says Nancy. "Your cake display is your shop window and so we work hard to give you an extensive choice of products including a mixture of round cakes, tray cakes, tray bakes. We have a dedicated NPD team who are consistently working on developing new products for our customers."

> “Cakehead's success comes down to the bakers' constant attention to its unique selling points: farm fresh ingredients; homemade recipes that let your customers taste the love; and fantastic vegan and gluten-free options to help you wow this growing market”



WE'VE GOT THE RECIPE FOR MORE CUSTOMERS



Take the finest sustainably sourced ingredients, combine them in tried-and-tested homemade recipes, package and present them beautifully and then deliver them on time and with a minimum hassle.

That's the Cakehead way and, whether you own a café, deli or garden centre, it helps you put out a gorgeous display for your customers. Add free delivery on orders over £150, next day delivery when you order before midday and Vegan and Gluten-free options, and we think you'll find it pretty irresistible too.

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www.cakehead.co.uk

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COOL REFRESHERS

From thirst-quenching juices to ready-to-drink cold brews, sometimes the icy chill of a cold drink is the only thing that will hit the spot. Today, there is something to suit everyone's tastes, whether that is an energy-boosting iced tea, a gently sparkling kombucha, or a refreshing hard seltzer. With high-quality ingredients and health benefits to boot, café owners will want to clear space in their fridges for the next generation of chilled beverages.



SOFT DRINKS



KYON DRINKS THE PPINGER
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BIDDENDEN SPARKLING APPLE JUICE
A gently sparkling apple juice produced from 100% fruit with no added water or sugar, and not from concentrate.
biddendenvineyards.com

DESPITE COVID-19, THE **SOFT DRINKS MARKET** WAS WORTH AN ESTIMATED **$994.7 BILLION** DURING **2020**, AND IT'S LIKELY TO REACH **$1.4 TRILLION** BY **2027**

SOURCE: GREENSEED GROUP'S GLOBAL CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS MARKET FACTS AND TRENDS

> "Our research shows that demand for healthy food and drinks has increased as Covid-19 has made healthy eating a higher priority to reducing the risk of chronic diseases"

DAISY LI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MINTEL FOOD AND DRINK, APAC

HEALTHY BENEFITS

Health concerns have long been a growing area of the drinks market, but thanks to the pandemic, beverages offering a healthy twist – whether through low-sugar formulations, all-natural nutrition or even the inclusion of functional, mood-boosting ingredients – are all the rage for the average consumer.



BEDISH FERMENTED BLACK CARROT & TURNIP JUICE HOT (SALGAM)
A natural, gluten-free, sugar-free, vegan and vegetarian juice produced by fermenting black carrot, turnip, water and rock salt. Absolutely no preservatives.
bedish.com

ZAG
An alchemic blend of hydrating cucumber, vitamin-C-rich lemons and limes and zingy mint with green tea and kombucha.
zagdrinks.com

ALITASA PREMIUM STILL WATER WITH GOLD IONS
Gold is known to be used to treat skin conditions and increase energy, will power, mental focus and libido.
alitasa.com



IN 2020, THE GLOBAL **COLD BREW BEVERAGES** MARKET REACHED A RETAIL **VALUE OF $215 MILLION**

SOURCE: GLOBAL COLD BREW BEVERAGES MARKET REPORT 2021 BY RESEARCHANDMARKETS.COM

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

Canned beverages have had a modern revamp, with today's consumers fond of their grab-and-go functionality and sustainable credentials. Hard seltzers, a trend imported from the US, are particularly in vogue today. "Hard seltzers will continue to grow in the UK, and they certainly haven't yet reached their peak," says Heather Morris of food and drink product developers SHFoodie. "New products are coming out all the time and each one is adding a further USP that will draw in consumers."



SERVED HARD SELTZER LIME
Crafted in Herefordshire by infusing sparkling spring water with wonky fruit and pairing this with their own ServedPure spirit.
serveddrinks.co.uk

CANVINO ROSÉ
A medium-dry, lightly sparkling wine with well-balanced fruit notes. The pale blush colour is indicative of Northern Italian wines and is perfect for any occasion.
canvino.com





FAUNA BREWING CHEETAH LAGER
Made with the finest British malts and classic noble hops, it's bright and light with grassy citrus finish.
faunabrewing.com

COLD BREW COFFEE & TEA



KAYTEA ORGANIC COLD BREW ICE TEA HERBAL PASSION
Cold brewed organic hibiscus with pineapple and passionfruit.
kaytea.co.uk

HUMANITEA EARL GREY OAT MILK LATTE
Brewed with fragrant classic Earl Grey and creamy oat milk, HumaniTea offers natural energy without a caffeine crash.
humanitea.co.uk





PRESTO COLD BREW COFFEE BAGS
Filled with sustainably-sourced single origin Arabica beans from Mogiana in Brazil, which make for the perfect cold brew.
presto-coffee.com

170 MILLION ICED BEVERAGES ARE **SERVED IN UK CAFÉS** EVERY YEAR

SOURCE: ALLEGRA WORLD COFFEE PORTAL



A SWEETER DEAL

Out-of-home is all about the experience, but finding indulgences that work for every consumer is the real win, says Wayne Starkey

COMMENTATORS



WAYNE STARKEY & JAMES WHITING
THE SKINNY FOOD CO

You might wonder how the modern quest for inclusivity impacts on your café business. Meet Wayne, a food industry disruptor who has built not one but two successful food businesses by paying attention to the unattended needs of consumers. Along with co-founder James Whiting, Wayne spotted a gap in the market for great-tasting sweet treats free from the sugar or calories that so many consumers try to avoid. Using personal experience of family members' diabetes, Wayne and James have created a brilliant range of low-sugar SKUs – including barista coffee syrups – that have really caught the current zeitgeist.

What began in 2018 as a collection of healthy ketchups and table sauces has evolved into a whole pantry catering to today's huge demographic of sugar-reducers. "With diabetics in the family I was always very aware of the need to reduce sugar among a core demographic," says Wayne, "but it's obviously not just diabetics looking to cut out sugar these days." If you remember the days of 'diabetic chocolate' and unappealing slimming drinks you'll also have witnessed the audience for low-calorie products skyrocket. In recent years sugar has been exposed as a symptom trigger for everyone from breastfeeding or menopausal women to body builders, and IBS sufferers to low carbers and keto dieters. "Both my kids have autism and need a low-sugar diet," says Wayne, "so it's something I'm really aware of. Our jams and spreads and sauces mean they can enjoy the same treats as anyone else. It's the same with our sugar-free coffee syrups. We find it's the younger millennials in particular who are really into their coffees but don't want to compromise their health."

The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly had an impact on everyone's awareness around both health and enjoying life's small indulgences. The biggest health scare for a century has given all of us the impetus to take responsibility for our own wellbeing. Wayne points to 'HFSS' (high fat, salt and/or sugar) legislation due to take effect in April next year. With the Government's obesity strategy leading to a bigger focus on healthy choices, consumer appetite for low-sugar, low-calorie choices looks set to grow. "With so many people taking their wellbeing and fitness really seriously there's a lot of people that just wouldn't dream of getting a vanilla latte in Starbucks and consuming the 400 calories that entails. But they do still want a treat and something special."

Café buyers can be assured that The Skinny Food Co caters to every taste, with a range of Zero Calorie Sugar Free Coffee Syrups available in such flavours as Salted Caramel Biscuit, Cookie Dough, Bonfire Toffee and the seasonal favourite Pumpkin Spice. Virtually Zero Non-Dairy Creamers are available in Chai Spice, Glazed Doughnut and Caramel Popcorn – ideal for giving vegan coffees an indulgent glow-up with none of the guilt. "It's about removing the sugars so customers can still enjoy a really great salted caramel latte, for example, but without the 60g of sugar that normally comes with it thanks to high-sugar syrups," says Wayne. "They're designed for people who enjoy the fantastic flavours but just don't want the extra sugar or the calories."



> Our coffee syrups are designed for people who enjoy fantastic flavours but just don't want the extra sugar or calories

Our customers love us!

Trustpilot

The SKINNY FOOD CO.®

@SKINNYFOODCO

25% OFF

OUR BARISTA COFFEE RANGE AND SKINNY SNACKS WITH CODE: **CAFESFC25**



www.SKINNYFOODCO.COM

Save on calories, sugars and choose a healthier alternative

YEAR-ROUND WARMERS

Hot drinks are a hot ticket at any time of year, but the consumer thirst for indulgent options powers up as the colder days descend. Look for quality options with great packaging, provenance and personalisation appeal when stocking your café and hot drink shelves.



THE APPETITE FOR **HOT DRINKS ON THE GO** SHOWS NO SIGN OF ABATING, WITH **THE UK (44%)** AND SPAIN (43%) **LEADING THE WAY** IN PERCENTAGE OF WALLET SHARE

SOURCE: KANTAR

COFFEE

Thanks to constant innovation and NPD throughout the coffee sector, the days of "instant or French press?" are well behind us. From cold brew to nitro coffee and roasted-on-site blends, there's plenty out there to excite discerning coffee drinkers... and the good news is that the buzzwords these shoppers are looking out for are well within the comfort zones of independent fine food retailers. There's so much innovation that it can be easy to lean too heavily into trends which might fall flat with your customer base, so ensure that you keep a strong stock of what you know sells: great-tasting high quality beans and ready-ground options, so you have a solid foundation from which to experiment with the wackier options out there.



DARK WOODS COFFEE TINS
Attractive tins filled with Dark Woods' award-winning coffee beans or pre-ground coffee, vacuum sealed and nitrogen flushed for extra freshness.
darkwoodscoffee.co.uk



KENON CREMA BAR ROASTED COFFEE BEANS
A very rich coffee blend with 70% Arabica and 30% Robusta coffee beans, which creates a strong-tasting Italian coffee with a complex aroma, soft aftertaste and compact cream top.
hbingredients.co.uk



BIRD & WILD ESPRESSO BLEND
Naturally grown under the rainforest canopy, a haven for birds and other wildlife and ideal conditions for nurturing deliciously different beans with a taste of the wild.
birdandwild.co.uk

> "Coffee is a thriving industry, but to maintain growth companies will need to lean into the key emerging trends for health, sustainability and e-commerce"
>
> JONNY FORSYTH, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MINTEL FOOD & DRINK

TEA

We all know that Brits love tea – we're famous for it – but the nation is confidently stepping towards modern iterations of the brew in place of the classic builder's cuppa. With more herbal infusions to explore than ever before, ethical credentials inspiring buying decisions, and quality a key consideration, there's plenty for indie retailers to dive into. There are some exciting innovations, too; check out Waterdrop's cube-shaped 'microtea' which can be dissolved straight into water. Traditional black tea options are still strong sellers, though – look for quality, provenance and eye-catching packaging to quench your customers' thirst for great tea.



DILMAH EARL GREY TEA
A majestic and aromatic single origin tea from the world's first genuinely ethical tea brand – picked, perfected and packed at the Dilmah Tea Gardens in Ceylon.
hbingredients.co.uk

BREW TEA CO ENGLISH BREAKFAST
A proper English Breakfast tea made from rolled whole leaves.
brewteacompany.co.uk





BABINGTONS WHITE PASSION TEA
Refreshing Pai Mu Tan scented with pear, peach and exotic fruit. The white tea is a perfect base for this light, delicate blend.
babingtons.com

FLAVOUR-BOOSTING SYRUPS

With personalisation the name of the game – not least after months of shoppers making their hot drinks at home just how they like them – a selection of syrups will tick that box with flair to spare. There are loads of options on the market; try seasonal flavours like pumpkin spice and gingerbread options around autumn and Christmas-time, and keep a stash of classics like vanilla, caramel and hazelnut available all year round. Chai syrup is a quick and convenient way to make great chai lattes, but in-the-know customers may opt for a 'dirty chai latte': a chai latte served with a shot of espresso for a caffeine hit.



SWEET FREEDOM CARAMEL SYRUP
A natural and vegan-friendly way to add caramel sweetness to coffee and frappes. Vegan-friendly, high in fibre and contains no preservatives.
sweetfreedom.co.uk

NEMI TEAS CHAI SYRUP
A delicate tea extract giving you a flavour of wonderfully rich and tasty infusion of Assam tea leaves with exotic Indian spices.
nemiteas.com





TAYLORSON'S HAZELNUT FLAVOURED SYRUP
Blended in the UK and flavoursome, versatile, suitable for vegetarians and easy to use.
taylorsons.co.uk

HOT CHOCOLATE

For fully fledged indulgence, nothing quite beats a hot chocolate – especially during the colder months. While undoubtedly a favourite with kids, there are plenty of decadent options out there for adult chocolate lovers too, which means it's worth taking a look beyond classic milk hot chocolates into the realms of higher percentage ones. Great quality hot chocolate is a popular gift option, particularly during autumn and winter, so keep an eye out for attractive and indulgent-looking packaging that anyone would be delighted to see in a festive hamper.



DIVINE SALTED CARAMEL HOT CHOCOLATE
A luxurious hot chocolate with creamy caramel and a dash of salt.
divinechocolate.com

GOUPIE WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE
A delicious white hot chocolate which is suitable for vegans when served with vegan-friendly milk.
goupiechocolate.com





PUMP STREET CHOCOLATE ECUADOR 85% DRINKING CHOCOLATE
The Ecuador bean when combined with a milky base brings flavours of toffee, toasted walnut and cocoa to the fore, allowing for a elegant and pure drinking chocolate.
pumpstreetchocolate.com

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

DARK WOODS COFFEE

Dark Woods Coffee, with their roastery based in the Yorkshire Pennines, focus on an artisanal, hands-on approach to production, from hand roasting in small batches to hand finishing their retail bags with signature rivets and tags. The business is proud to be B-Corp certified, to have won over 40 Great Taste Awards in the past five years, and two prestigious Golden Fork awards. They see this as a reflection of their commitment to quality across a range of coffee styles and flavours, and helping retail and hospitality partners to sell more coffees on the shelf and in the coffee shop.
darkwoodscoffee.co.uk



PRESSING ON SINCE 1986

Cawston Press's newest launch is perfectly positioned to cater for the demand for great tasting, clean-label premium soft drinks, says Andy Hope-Johnstone, out of home channel manager

After pressing their first apple juices 30 years ago, Cawston Press has become a household name when it comes to great quality, fantastic-tasting pressed fruit-based drinks. "We started out with a range of pressed apple juices and we now offer a range of natural soft drinks all made with pressed fruit," says Andy Hope-Johnstone, out of home channel manager at the business. Cawston Press's dedication to doing things right – "you'll never find any added sugar, sweeteners, colourings or preservatives in any of our drinks," says Andy – has earned it a strong reputation across the drink industry within fine food retailers, quality foodservice operations and multiples nationwide. The company has won a number of great taste awards for its drinks and industry recognition for its stand-out packaging.

Key to Cawston Press's success is its ability to cater to a wide range of people, from young taste buds all the way up to adults wanting a refreshing soft drink made with natural ingredients. "We find consumers who care about clean label foods and incredible tasting food and drink are always a natural fit for our drinks," Andy explains, meaning that the brand is a perfect fit for independent cafés with a discerning customer base.

Delicious soft drinks for every occasion

Whether shoppers are looking for breakfast-friendly 1 litre juices (also great for making blended smoothies), juice cartons with paper straws for kids or cans of sparkling fruit beverages for on-the-go, Cawston Press has it all. New to the line up are glass bottles of sparkling drinks, perfect for eating and drinking out of home, and available in three quintessentially British and much loved flavours: Sparkling Rhubarb, Sparkling Cloudy Apple and Sparkling Elderflower Lemonade.

"We understand while our sparkling can range is a perfect fit for on-the-go, we wanted to also help make the drinks available to customers as an ideal solution for a more premium single serve soft drink," says Andy. Tailored specifically for the hospitality industry, the new premium format offers restaurants and cafés an elevated pressed juice soft drink option for consumers returning to establishments over the summer and beyond. What's more, all three drinks contain only 60 calories or under, and the glass bottles themselves are 100% recyclable. The 250ml serve size also makes the drinks perfect for mixing. Rhubarb G&T anyone?

A new era for foodservice

After what has undeniably been a challenging year for foodservice businesses, Cawston Press is primed to support its café and retail customers. "We're currently enjoying seeing all our customers open back up," says Andy, "and we are seeing very high levels of demand as lockdown restrictions continue to ease" as well as consumers enjoying our range of soft drinks across the UK."

With the sun finally shining again on the food-to-go and hospitality sectors, the time is right to quench the consumer thirst for great quality, delicious cold drinks with a natural approach at their heart. Cawston Press is here to help you do just that, and it is the smart choice for discerning café owners.



THE **PERFECT** SERVE

Perfect enjoyed on their own over ice, used as a mixer for a signature cocktail or as a fruity twist on classic serves. Alternatively, try serving over vanilla ice cream for a Rhubarb ice cream float!



BEYOND THE FROTH

With 20 years experience in the alternative milk category the Planted range has both style and substance



Want to make sure the plant milk in your chiller and coffees are delicious enough to keep conscious customers coming back for more? "We're a speciality business, and always have been," says Planted managing director Ed Salt. "Our challenge is to make sure we source and develop products that taste great and tick the boxes that sit with the morals and ethics of our business." Launched in 2018, the range comprises three 330ml on-the-go drinks: Oat with Date & Vanilla, Coconut & Cocoa, and Almond & Coffee. In autumn a new one-litre British oat milk joined the range, giving cafes and coffee counters the opportunity to serve a home-grown plant milk (yes, it froths) in their hot drinks.

What's more, Delamere Dairy (which owns Planted) also recently launched a webshop selling Planted direct to consumers, building brand awareness among customers looking for a plant milk they can trust when out of home. "The three values in the business are fun, health and responsibility, so everything we do with NPD has to hit that," says Ed. "We question any new product as to whether it's right for us, whether we'd give it to our children and whether it's right for the planet." The result? Milks that do good but also taste great. And you don't just have to take Ed's word for it; with Great Taste stars and accolades from the Free From Food Awards, you know you're stocking a great-tasting product that your discerning customers will return to time and again.

> "The three values in the business are fun, health and responsibility"

And of course your café clients like to know their coffee spend spreads benefits. Every Planted carton is renewable and recyclable. Planted has an established partnership with the Woodland Trust; 2p from each carton of Planted Oat drinks is donated to the charity to plant and protect trees and woods across the UK.





WHAT'S IN STORE FOR CAFÉS AND FOOD TO GO POST-COVID?

After a tough year in 2020, food to go is back on the rise. We look into the predicted £1.1 billion sales opportunity and how fine food independents can cash in



The UK's food to go market is expected to take off this year after suffering a 45.5% decline in 2020. Thanks to easing restrictions and the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines, Lumina Intelligence expects the sector to grow by nearly a third to reach a value of £15.3 billion in 2021.

A wider recovery is expected to come in the following years, with the food to go market on track to climb to a value of £22.6bn in 2024. Katherine Prowse, insight manager at Lumina Intelligence said, "The sudden shift from a highly transient, on-the-go society, to one with restrictions placed on movement had a significant negative impact on the UK food to go market in 2020, with much trade diverted to other routes to market such as delivery.

"However, buoyed by the easing of restrictions and the swift vaccine rollout, we will see a resurgence of the market in 2021, before a full recovery to pre-pandemic sales levels by 2024."

Independents with newly (or soon-to-be) reopened cafés and foodservice operations are well positioned to cash in on this trend.

THE **TOP 10 FOOD TO GO CHANNELS** WILL SEE A **£1.1 BILLION** SALES OPPORTUNITY BETWEEN **2022 AND 2024**

SOURCE: LUMINA INTELLIGENCE

The café opportunity

Cafés are poised to make the most of the boom in takeaway coffee drinks, which made up 50% of all drinks consumed over the last four months, according to Lumina's research.

Younger consumers in particular were the most likely to socialise outdoors on 'coffee walks', with nearly one in four having picked up the habit of purchasing a hot drink to go when on a walk with a friend since March 2020.

In the coming months, outdoor socialising will become more and more popular as lockdown restrictions ease, and food to go is poised to capitalise on this, with 21% of consumers saying they are likely to purchase food to eat in the park. For those aged 18-24, this figure rises to 38%, setting a clear opportunity to cafés and delis situated near green spaces.

Helen Thekli of Helen's Coffee on the Green in Chingford, closed her shop for five weeks at the start of the pandemic and was nervous about reopening. "It was very nerve wracking going back and only doing takeaway – something we'd never done before," she tells *Speciality Food*. "I also had to think outside the box, so I started offering afternoon teas." The new offering quickly became popular with customers, who shared recommendations on social media.

"I was overwhelmed," Helen says. "I have amazing customers and staff and the community spirit has just been truly, truly amazing. I'm told that I'm a rock in this and that when customers come to me they don't just come for a coffee; it's like coming in for a hug."

Elsewhere, Sam Dickinson of The Fold Farm Shop, told *Speciality Food* that a food box service launched at the beginning of the pandemic was soon replaced by in-store options, as customers were keen to take advantage of the nearby nature trail. "I think people have been happy to come to the shop because we're located outside of town. I think people use that as their opportunity to leave the house as well. It's a nice environment to come to," she says.

> "The sudden shift from a highly transient, on-the-go society, to one with restrictions placed on movement had a significant negative impact on the UK food to go market in 2020, with much trade diverted to other routes to market such as delivery"

Catering to home workers

With more consumers planning to work from home in the future, there is also a growing focus on food to go products that are heated at home. One new start-up looking to make the



most of this trend is D'Ambrosi Fine Foods in the Cotswolds. Owner chef Andrew D'Ambrosi told *Speciality Food* that food to go has "thrived" during the pandemic. "Our food is restaurant quality but specifically created to maintain consistency and taste on the reheat without compromise," he explains.

As well as offering quality food to go, the shop supplies a curated selection of wines and liquors as well as homemade candles and floristry services, and the owners are now used to seeing a queue out the door made up of both locals and, when allowed, tourists.

THE **FOOD TO GO** MARKET IS **ON TRACK TO CLIMB** TO A **VALUE OF £22.6BN** IN **2024**

SOURCE: LUMINA INTELLIGENCE

Although Andrew expects more consumers to shift to eating out in restaurants and pubs when they can, he is still confident about the future of his business. "Because we are unique in our approach, we believe our business will continue to do well."

Indeed, Lumina's research shows that in the years to come, convenience stores' dominance in the food to go category will fall as it comes under pressure to compete with dedicated food to go specialists.

The future of food to go

Changing working and socialising habits means the landscape for food to go is transforming. "Portable food to go solutions will strike appeal with consumers meeting friends/family in parks, whereas a shift in focus on food to 'go home', will provide a relevant solution to those home working," explains Katherine.

But these changes pose great opportunities, with Lumina predicting the top 10 food to go channels will see a £1.1 billion sales opportunity between 2022 and 2024, and sandwich and bakery and coffee shop and café segments are poised to take the lead. For fine food shops, now is the perfect time to rethink your food to go options and ensure you have a selection in place to suit the latest habits of today's consumers.

> "I'm told that I'm a rock in this and that when customers come to me they don't just come for a coffee; it's like coming in for a hug"



NEW FOR 2021

OUR NEW SOURDOUGH BITES AVAILABLE IN BOTH 90g AND 26g PACKS FROM AUGUST

60% LESS FAT THAN CRISPS

99 KCAL PER SERVING

BAKED NOT FRIED

CREAM OF THE CROP

Great frothing milk that's ready whenever your customers are? Just Milk has the answer



How have you found footfall through your café this summer? Whilst market researchers Springboard predicted 20% more shoppers on high streets, rural businesses may find autumn brings custom in fits and starts. But don't worry – Just Milk has you covered for ambient milk that helps avoid the shortages or spoilage of relying on fresh. "We definitely had a surge of demand for UHT milk during the pandemic, as it was a much more reliable option," says Just Milk's Camille Sharif. "Businesses have been much more conscious of waste and with fresh milk having such short shelf life, UHT has been a great option to limit wastage and cut costs – important as businesses are trying to get back on their feet."

If UHT is anathema to your sourcing policy, consider the benefits of keeping a back-up supply. "The heat treatment that UHT milk benefits from makes it a lot creamier than fresh milk, even in its skimmed version," points out Camille. "It makes UHT ideal for coffees as it forms the perfect froth every time, even in a 'skinny' version." Indeed, it's commonplace in celebrated cafés of continental Europe where Just Milk is trusted for it's great flavour preserved through a few seconds of heat treatment at 140°C. "Another benefit is being able to stockpile it in your store room," says Camille. "Bulk buying is cost efficient and being able to store it in ambient conditions means you do not lose any valuable fridge space.



"Just Milk is part of the farmer-owned cooperative Sodiaal, which collects milk from local farmers. It guarantees a high level of animal welfare, non GMO feed, and a farm-to-table approach that minimises waste." Just Milk has a total shelf life of 180 days, and lasts up to a week opened in the fridge.

"Just Milk is part of the farmer-owned cooperative Sodiaal, which collects milk from local farmers. It guarantees a high level of animal welfare, non GMO feed, and a farm-to-table approach that minimises waste"





SAINT KITCHEN

RITUAL VISUALS

A NEW DAWN FOR INDEPENDENT CAFÉS

Ellen Manning finds that, in spite of the hardship of the past 18 months, the indie coffee scene is determined to come back stronger

COMMENTATORS



LYDIA PAPAPHILIPPOPOULOS-SNAPE
WARWICK STREET & SAINT KITCHENS



PAUL ROOKE
BRITISH COFFEE ASSOCIATION

During the lockdowns of 2020, the sight of people doing their 'daily exercise', takeaway coffee in hand, either alone or with a friend, became a regular one and something that meant more than a simple caffeine fix. For many people, their local café became a lifeline, doling out hot drinks alongside words of comfort when we needed it most.

Before the Covid crisis hit, research by Allegra World Coffee Portal's *Rise of Independents UK 2019* report revealed that there were 7,022 independent cafés serving up more than 10.5 million cups of coffee each week in the UK, with an estimated value of £2.4 billion. At the time, the report forecast that the sector would grow to exceed 8,000 outlets by 2024. Probably a reasonable assumption, if it weren't for a global pandemic. Independent café owners will readily admit that they have faced a challenging 18 months, with some wondering whether they'd make it. But for many, the obstacles of the past year-and-a-half have forced adaptations and changes that haven't just seen them survive, but come back stronger than ever.

Among the many changes brought about by the Covid crisis is a change to the way we drink and appreciate coffee in the UK, says Paul Rooke, executive director at the British Coffee Association (BCA). Research carried out by



WARWICK STREET KITCHEN

RITUAL VISUALS

the BCA before the pandemic, he says, found that 50% of the UK's coffee was consumed at home, 30% in the workplace and 20% 'out of home' – providing a huge contribution in income due to its margins. "The question is how has that picture changed," says Rooke. "We are hoping to re-do that piece of work, but it's fairly obvious that that out-of-home sector, whether restaurants, cafés or coffee shops, got hammered in the early stages of lockdown." Despite that, Rooke is optimistic when it comes to independent cafés, with an upturn in footfall following the lifting of restrictions combined with the pivotal role coffee plays in our lives as well as its flexibility all helping. "Coffee is quite easy in a way – you don't have to stay in the building to drink it and cafés have not had to worry quite as much about finding

> “Coffee is a social thing, a café is a place to sit and chat, do some work, meet up – there’s a social element and people are keen to get back to that”

people somewhere to sit. Coffee is a social thing, a café is a place to sit and chat, do some work, meet up – there’s a social element and people are keen to get back to that.”

Adapt to survive

They may have benefited from people’s refusal to do without their coffee, but that didn’t mean cafés didn’t have to adapt to survive. “Yes, some businesses had an online presence before March 2020, but a lot that didn’t had one very quickly thereafter and have been quite innovative in how they have managed to retain their original customers or win over new customers,” continues Rooke. The use of online marketing, whether through websites or social media, helped people discover the local, independent cafés that they may previously have overlooked, simultaneously winning those cafés new, loyal customers, he says.

Adaptation is something Lydia Papaphilippopulos-Snape, owner of Warwick Street Kitchen in Leamington Spa and Saint Kitchen in Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter, experienced firsthand. Asked how it felt when she was first told to close her doors, she is frank. “I can’t put it any more eloquently than it being a case of taking a business that is reliant on people coming into your space in their droves, as many as possible, and not being able to have them in your space. And fundamentally trying to figure out how to get your product to them in a way that still makes sense to you and your business.”

For Papaphilippopulos-Snape, there were several challenges. First, two different businesses in two areas with different audiences. “Warwick Street Kitchen had its hardcore community and fans while Saint Kitchen was a fledgling business that had only been trading for a couple of months, and we were still building that community. That meant we had to go about it differently.” They tackled Warwick Street Kitchen first, basing plans on the assumption that lockdown would last longer than the few weeks originally hoped for. “On day one of lockdown we said, ‘okay, we’re going to have to get on board with a delivery platform, which is it going to be?’” They had previously shied away from such platforms, wanting people to ‘take a moment’ and enjoy the café experience.

But Papaphilippopulos-Snape admits that when faced with the situation presented by March 2020, the question wasn’t whether or not to start using one, but how to do it in a way that would fit with their business and values. “We didn’t want to mindlessly throw food in boxes. We wanted to do it in a way that made us proud.” As well as switching to an online operation and delivery system, there had to be a full re-costing of the menu, taking into account things like packaging and delivery charges. When it came to Saint Kitchen, the first step was to build an audience that didn’t exist. “It was a case of being there for people. Where we are there are a lot of one and two-bedrooms flats, so lots of people living alone who felt isolated. We were on their daily walk, and being open helped them. There were days where it made zero sense for us to be open, the spreadsheets were all red, but I thought, ‘this is why we do this’.”

Light at the end of the tunnel

Papaphilippopulos-Snape feels that they have emerged from the pandemic in a strong position – especially for Saint Kitchen which has now built its own community by being there for people when they needed it most. Some changes they were forced to make have become permanent fixtures, from celebration cakes to outside catering as well as more ‘back office’ changes. “Historically we said no to delivery platforms because it wasn’t what we were about. We wanted people to slow down, take time and have a real break. But with this, on a quiet rainy day when people don’t want to leave the house we can still serve them. Why would you turn that off?” Similarly, embracing technology like video conferencing, usually associated with more corporate settings, has allowed them to work more efficiently. The situation has also forced them to focus on the customer experience – sticking to table service and providing people with a really special experience that they’ve been missing for so long, she adds.

For Rooke, the general appreciation of small businesses that has grown during the pandemic has benefited cafés and is something he hopes will last. “I think people at the moment have appreciated small businesses much more and local business and the fact that the high street does mean more to them than perhaps it did 18-20 months ago. How long that continues and whether coffee will outlive some of the other elements of the high street is yet to be seen, but it’s certainly there at the moment.”

PRE-PANDEMIC THERE WERE **7,022 INDEPENDENT** CAFÉS SERVING UP MORE THAN **10.5 MILLION** CUPS OF **COFFEE** EACH **WEEK** IN THE **UK**, WITH AN ESTIMATED VALUE OF **£2.4 BILLION**

SOURCE: ALLEGRA WORLD COFFEE PORTAL’S RISE OF INDEPENDENTS UK 2019 REPORT

RETAILER FOCUS



Lorna Jackson, owner of Real Meals Deli & Café in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, experienced similar emotions to Papaphilippopulos-Snape when she was ordered to close her doors for the first time in 20 years.

“You don’t imagine anyone is going to ring you one day and tell you to close your doors. At one point I wondered if we would ever open them again. There’s no manager to ring, no head office to call and ask what to do – it’s just you. Then you’ve got all your staff who are looking to you.”

Like other businesses, Jackson pivoted, supplying groceries including fresh fish and veg to locals who were struggling to get delivery slots. But the coffee machines stayed off. “To turn them on and clean and service them was just too expensive when we couldn’t guarantee an income. Plus we had to furlough most of our experienced staff.” Coffee returned in 2020 alongside takeaway food like quiches and cakes but not everything is back to ‘normal’, she says. “The business has always been like coming to someone’s house – tables in the middle and shelves round the outside, so someone might have to lean past you to look at a sauce or chutney, but that kind of ambiance just doesn’t work now.” But it’s not all doom and gloom – with a new opportunity to create outside space helping them emerge stronger. “A partial road closure has allowed us to expand our outdoor seating,” says Jackson. “We used some of our government grant money for bamboo screens, picnic tables, planters, and it looks really good which is attracting people. We’re a seaside town, so if people come here they usually head straight to the beach but now they’re heading here. We’ve always had our own following – hence being here 20 years – but this attracts visitors in a way we never have before. Since Easter it’s been busier than ever.”



REAL MEALS DELI & CAFÉ

NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK







PACKAGING THAT DOESN'T COST THE EARTH

Kite Packaging has released a range of 'food-to-go' products with an eco-friendly focus

The pandemic necessitated a shift to takeaway services in place of eating in, and the lucrative nature of this avenue was exemplified for many vendors. With UK households spending an average of around five pounds per person per week on takeaway meals and the rise of online delivery concepts, it is even easier for local and independent businesses to benefit from the market growth.

Accordingly, Kite, one of the largest packaging suppliers in the UK, has launched a sustainable range of affordable and functional food packaging. A challenge associated with takeaway refreshments is often the environmental impact the packaging can have if not sourced and disposed of responsibly. In response, the employee-share-owned business chose to focus on easily recyclable products alongside biodegradable and compostable packaging.

The kraft difference

Their salad bowls, takeaway food trays and burger boxes are all manufactured from kraft, a strong and inherently more sustainable material compared to other types of paper. The method of production doesn't use excessive bleaching to give the paper its authentic appearance, lessen energy output and maintain the original strength of the paper. The overall process is simplified and almost all the resources used are able to be reclaimed or reused, making it a self-sustaining procedure. Each of Kite's kraft food products are recyclable kerbside for easy disposal by the consumer after food waste has been scraped off. Kraft containers offer end-to-end environmental sensitivity in addition to excellent functionality.

The salad bowls and takeaway boxes feature a PE lining that provides moisture and grease resistance, granting the food vendor full flexibility in terms of their menu. Any liquid elements of the content will stay securely inside the packaging, enabling a business to present noodle soup dishes with confidence and adorn their salad with as much dressing as desired. Despite this leakproof design, both styles are intended to be breathable and odourless for the freshest possible impression on arrival. These features compounded with the stackable structure empower vendors to deliver their goods in a practical and cost-effective manner in addition to simply selling on site.

Hygienic and convenient

Alongside food, the takeaway drinks industry has experienced a surge in sales as the appeal of outdoor gatherings continues to thrive. Made from virgin food grade paper, Kite's coffee cups are fully recyclable while retaining essential hygienic qualities. The double walled exterior acts as insulation to protect the customer's skin while they cradle their hot drink. To recycle the cup, simply empty the contents before recycling in the same way as any other household paper or card. Available in three traditional sizes with accompanying lids, these cups are ideal containers for hot or cold beverages. For those craving something stronger, virgin plastic cups can be supplied to comply to the sanitation requirements of serving alcohol commercially.

Each of Kite's handpicked products exhibit convenience combined with consciousness to satisfy the increasingly environmentally aware customer of today. Typically, a desire to dispose of packaging responsibly is conflicted with the busy lifestyle that attracts 'on-the-go' food to begin with. Kite's range of recyclable, biodegradable and compostable products is designed to minimise the environmental impact of food packaging as much as possible while providing solutions that still present a company's food in the best condition possible. The products are offered with a selection of varying measurements to enable businesses of all sizes offering a variety of different dishes to enjoy the practical and environmental benefits of Kite's products.

> "Kite's range of recyclable, biodegradable and compostable products is designed to minimise the environmental impact of food packaging"

On the go packaging

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